

line transactions overly burdensome. On-line merchants, providers of both goods and services, have touted the benefits to consumers of using the Internet to gather information that facilitates targeted marketing. This could very well be the case but I want to know that consumers are informed of and agree with these marketing practices.

Determining more specifically what consumers want from privacy legislation is something that I hope we can do in the next session of Congress.

While much, through certainly not all, of the discussion in Congress about privacy is focused on the issue of the on-line collection and use of consumer information, I think it is also important that Congress remain cognizant of the fact that "privacy" as it relates to the Internet is a far broader and more complex issue. For all of its salutary effects, the ease with which the Internet allows for the compilation and sharing of private information gathered in the physical world, information about financial transactions, medical histories, reading habits, eating habits, sleeping habits, information about almost every aspect of one's life raises legitimate concerns that Congress should and will continue to address.

The privacy of medical information, which can be intensely personal, is one such issue about which Congress must remain vigilant. Improved technology along with changes in health care delivery, billing systems, information gathering and genetic testing all increase the number of people who have access to health records. Americans should know that personally identifiable health information is private and they should have control over who has access to it. At the same time our challenge is to find a way to balance legitimate needs for health care information—for example, medical research—and individual privacy rights.

Future Congresses will adopt additional health care reforms. We clearly need to improve our Nation's health care system. Although most Americans are satisfied with their health care, most Americans are also concerned about those in our country who have inadequate health care and no hope of improving their situation. I support reforms that improve access to quality health care for those who have none, that keep intact our wonderful system of hospitals and clinics in all areas of our country and that provide people with meaningful choices.

When future Congresses address this area, one issue I will watch most carefully is the amount of health care information that is provided to the Government, and how this information is used. We must be careful not to adopt measures that give Government regulators the ability to peek into people's private medical records. A few years ago, my home State of Washington embarked on several health care reforms. Most of these reforms were in the wrong direction. Our legislature adopt-

ed reforms that put the government in charge of health care decisions for people and gave a government commission the ability to cancel private health insurance coverage in our state.

I found both of those moves bothersome, but our legislature didn't stop at just controlling health care decisions for our citizens. No, our legislature took one additional chilling step. It decided that if the government was providing health care, as well as dictating which private health plans could remain in business, the government should have access to personal, private medical records.

That is going way too far, and fortunately, the good people of Washington made sure that radical change was not placed into the law.

Over the next year, I am convinced that Congress will adopt meaningful health care reforms that help people, but as we do that, I must constantly advise my colleagues to follow the "do no harm" rules of medicine and not fall prey to those who believe that government-run health care, along with all that it brings, is the right solution to this challenge.

No matter the type of information in question—consumer or medical—Americans have the right to a reasonable expectation of privacy. Thoughtful legislative action is needed at the federal level to address the legitimate concerns many Americans currently have in this regard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE UNITED STATES AND NATO

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, there has been an effort in recent days to score partisan political points by misrepresenting Governor Bush's commitment to NATO and southeast Europe. Unfortunately, some of my Senate colleagues have been involved in this effort.

No one in the Senate has been more involved in our policy toward southeast Europe, and no one cares more than I do about that part of the world. I have traveled to the region three times this year—on a factfinding mission, to participate in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and to participate in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I have been to Kosovo twice and visited with troops.

I have been involved in efforts to bring about alternative leadership in Serbia—something that has finally happened. I have been a leader on the Stability Pact with the belief that its successful implementation is crucial to the long-term stability, prosperity, and peace in the region. I have also constantly watched the situation in Kosovo, outraged at the ongoing ethnic cleansing going on there today.

With this background and involvement, I can say definitely that Governor Bush understands the importance of the region to our national security interests.

I think it is important that we set the record straight. Governor Bush has said that he would systematically review our military commitments internationally upon his inauguration. He will look at them across the world. This will include a review of our deployments in the Balkans. He has said that he will work with our allies to develop a strategy to remove our troops from the region when it is possible to do so without threatening peace and stability in the region or our relationship with our European allies. He understands the important relationship we have with our NATO allies.

There never was and never will be any statement by Governor Bush or, if he is elected, President Bush, regarding a reduced commitment to NATO. He understands how important NATO is.

Vice President GORE has joined Governor Bush in saying that we should pull out of the Balkans when we are no longer needed.

Governor Bush is committed to political stability and security in the Balkans. He emphasized this point repeatedly—that stability in southeast Europe is vital to Europe and hence to the U.S. In other words, we have strategic interests in southeast Europe, which are important to Europe and to the security of the U.S. and, for that matter, peace in the world. So Governor Bush is committed to political stability.

Without the Governor's involvement in the Byrd-Warner debate on our troop commitment to Kosovo, the next President would be facing a July 1 deadline to decide whether to stay or go. Governor Bush stood up and was counted at the time of the Byrd-Warner discussion in the Senate. He demonstrated leadership at a time when leaders from both parties were considering having the U.S. unilaterally withdraw from a NATO commitment. That was a very important thing that he did at that time, because if he had not stood up and said he thought it was overreach, we would have lost that on the floor of the Senate and would have done irreparable damage to our relationship with NATO.

We must remember that the Clinton-Gore administration promised the American people in 1995 that our troops would not be in Bosnia for longer than a year. That promise was never kept. Rather than set a misguided deadline, Governor Bush is simply saying we should not, and will not, be in the Balkans forever. Nothing more.

Governor Bush has said time and again that he would actively consult our European allies in the formation and implementation of our policies in NATO and in southeast Europe. I hope Lord Robertson, who heads up NATO, understands that. I made that very clear when I was at the NATO Assembly in Budapest. We understand how

important our leadership and our commitment is to NATO.

Governor Bush is an internationalist who is committed to NATO and our European allies.

These attacks are just partisan politics designed, in my opinion, to turn attention from a growing scandal involving Vice President GORE.

Just this morning, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing to examine Vice President GORE's dealings with former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin regarding weapons sales to Iran. It has been widely reported that the Vice President failed to fully and properly inform relevant congressional oversight committees regarding agreements reached with Russian officials. He has to be more forthcoming about what went on there.

The hearing was in response to new and critical information on this matter which surfaced in the New York Times report dated October 13. Governor Bush remains fully committed to NATO and American leadership in Europe. Repeating, he remains fully committed to NATO and American leadership in Europe.

He understands our unique role and is committed to maintaining that leadership. We know how important our leadership is to NATO. We certainly found that out during the Kosovo-Serbian war that we had. To suggest that he doesn't understand is just plain hogwash.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

THE FAILURES OF THIS CONGRESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, over the period of the past weeks and months, as the ranking member of our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, I have tried to point out the failing of this Congress and the fact that we have not addressed reauthorization of the elementary and secondary education bill, which we are charged to do—we had 22 days of hearings and we had a markup and legislation was reported out of our committee.

It has been several months since that legislation was on the floor and then withdrawn by the majority leader. In spite of the efforts of many of us to bring that measure back on the floor of the Senate, we have been unable to do so. We think it is enormously important that we have an opportunity to do so.

We are now some 3 weeks after the date that was suggested that we move into the adjournment for this Congress, and we have seen days go by, quorum calls held, and still no action. Now pending before the committee, we have the bankruptcy legislation, which is going to benefit in a substantial way the credit card industry. But we are not having the opportunity to address the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which can benefit families

all across this country, with support for State and local communities.

This issue, I think, is back before the Senate because, during the period of our national debate between the Vice President and Governor Bush, great attention has been given to the issues of education. Assurances were given to the American people representing the different positions of the candidates. We have pointed out—I did last week—some of the realities and some of the facts about what is happening in our public schools across this country. And also I pointed out the fact that Texas has not been keeping up with the rest of the country on objective tests. That was challenged by some colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Now we have the Rand Corporation—virtually a non-partisan organization—which has done a very careful review of the Texas experience, and they agree with us and, in effect, agree with Vice President GORE on the issues of education.

I am glad we are getting some clarification. We only have 2 weeks left in this campaign, but I am glad we are beginning to get some clarification on this issue. First of all, I remind our colleagues about what assurances were given to the American people about the commitment of our majority leader on the issues of elementary and secondary education. We only provide some 7 cents out of every dollar that goes into the local communities. States have the primary responsibility. Nonetheless, we can give some focus and attention to programs that have demonstrated positive results in terms of academic achievement and accomplishment. That really is the purpose for which these resources are out there, and also to give special emphasis to the most economically disadvantaged children in this country so they are not going to be left out or left behind.

We come to this debate and discussion looking over the period of recent years. We wonder whether the positions that have been accepted by the Republican leadership are very much in conflict with the age-old positions of the Republican Party with regard to education, where they believe there should not be a role for any Federal aid to education. We had that debate in the early sixties. We have had it many times since then.

Nonetheless, we have seen in the early 1990s when the Republican leadership assumed control of the Senate the first order of business for them was a massive rescission of moneys that had been appropriated and were going to be allocated to school districts that would have provided help and assistance to needy schools across the country.

That money had been appropriated by the House and Senate and agreed to by the conference, signed by the President of the United States. One of the first orders of business by the Republican leadership was to rescind that money. We saw a rescission of about \$2 billion. The initial request was considerably higher. It was reduced, but we had the rescission.

Then in the 1990s we faced the onslaught of our Republican leadership who wanted to abolish the Department of Education. I think most Members and most parents across the country believe that when the President of the United States sits down with the Members at the White House, we want someone sitting at the President's elbow when there is a discussion and debate about domestic priorities in the United States, someone who is always going to say: What about education? What about education, Mr. President?

Those voices are there, appropriately so, in terms of the security interests of the United States and defense, for the foreign policy of the United States, the Secretary of State. We have them there with regard to housing. We have them there in terms of the environment. We have them there in terms of commerce and transportation. Many Members believe we should have them there with regard to the issues of education.

That was not the position of the Republican leadership. They said: No, we don't want to have that there. They tried unsuccessfully to eliminate the Department of Education. Nonetheless, we find the Department is there. It is considerably downsized. It has had an extraordinary record, with great improvement over the previous Republican Secretaries of Education in collecting the debts that are owed to the Department. They have reduced the student loan default rate from 22.4% in 1992 to 6.9% in 2000. Both the guaranteed and student loan collections have been much more efficient.

Now there is a different attitude by the new Republican leadership. It is expressed by the Republican leader himself, going back to January of 1999:

Education is going to be a central issue this year. . . . For starters, we must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

January 29, 1999:

But education is going to have a lot of attention, and it's not going to be just words. . . .

June 22, 1999:

Education is number one on the agenda for the Republicans in Congress this year. . . .

Chamber of Commerce, February 1, 2000:

We're going to work very hard on education. I have emphasized that every year I've been majority leader . . . and Republicans are committed to doing that.

February 3, 2000:

We must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. . . . Education will be a high priority in this Congress.

May 1, 2000:

This is very important legislation. I hope we can debate it seriously and have amendments in the education area. Let's talk education.

May 2, 2000:

Question: . . . have you scheduled a cloture vote on that?

Senator LOTT: No, I haven't scheduled a cloture vote. . . . But education is number one in the minds of the American people all across this country and every State, including my own State.